

CANADIAN GROUP OF PAINTERS
1963 - 1964 Exhibition

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, November 8 - December 1, 1963.
Calgary Allied Arts Council, January 3 - 23, 1964.
(a selection of up to 50 paintings from 1963 exhibition).

PRIZE WINNER

The 1963 Exhibition of the Canadian Group of Painters offered for the first time a prize of \$1,000.00 for the best painting in the exhibition. The work adjudged to be the best painting in the show was "Winter on Stanley Street" Oil 24 x 30 inches.

OPENING-1963 EXHIBITION

In spite of very bad weather the 1963 Exhibition opening of the Group was well attended and from reports a very successful opening was held on November 7th, 1963.

Dr. Arthur Lismer, a member of the Group of Seven and a Founding Member of the Canadian Group of Painters officially opened the exhibition at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts on Thursday evening November 7th, 1963. Dr. Lismer announced the winner of the prize as mentioned above. A special word of thanks is extended to Dr. Evan Turner, Director of the MMFA for his assistance and also that of his staff in making the opening a successful event.

SALES OF WORKS - 1963 EXHIBITION

It is indeed encouraging to note that the 1963 Exhibition has resulted in a number of sales of paintings. Sales up to and including November 22nd, 1963, are as follows:

Giuseppe Fiore	"Le Retour"	Oil 48x34.	\$300.00
Kathleen M. Morris	"Queen Mary and Cote des Neiges Road"	Oil. 18x24.	\$400.00
Anne Savage	"Morning"	Oil 34x49.	\$300.00
Gentile Tondino	"Woman with Mirror"	Oil. 48x32.	\$500.00

CATALOGUE ERRATA

In the listing of members Leonard Brooks is shown under the United States of America whereas Roloff Beny is shown under Mexico. This listing by country, should, of course, be reversed.

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CRITICS REPORTS (1 only received to date)

"Contemporary Painting" "Art Surveys Canadian Scene"
by Robert Ayre - Montreal Star, November 11th, 1963.

The three travelling exhibitions that attempt (none of them with complete satisfaction, it must be admitted) to survey contemporary Canadian painting regularly are the National Gallery's biennials and the annuals of the Royal Canadian Academy and the Canadian Group of Painters. The biennial doesn't always light on Montreal. This year, the closest it came was Ottawa. The other two get here once in three years. We can always fill in with the Museum's Spring show, which has become more a national than a local showcase.

This year, along with Calgary, which gets it in January, we have the Canadian Group in two big upstairs galleries of the Museum through Dec. 1.

Outgrowth of the disbanded Group of Seven, it came into being in 1933. No attempt has been made, however to take any notice of the 30th anniversary. A retrospective might have been in order, but maybe funds are lacking. Certainly the list of exhibits isn't the illustrated catalogue we have been accustomed to see.

Of the original 28 members, 11 have died, as have five others who joined subsequently. Last year, the Group paid tribute in its catalogue to George Pepper. This year, Anne Savage has written a warmhearted appreciation of Ethel Seath, one of the pioneers of art education in Montreal.

The 1963 exhibition is, I should say "average", no better, no worse than Group exhibitions have been, lately: some showy emptiness, some ineptitude, some utter trivialty, some honest exploration of new fields, some work of perception and sensivity. Three or four of the paintings were in last year's show but since they did not come to Montreal, it doesn't matter.

It goes without saying that even in a Canadian Group show the "Canadian Scene" is out. The few painters who recognize it are from another generation than the majority, and look like strangers. There is still power, however, in the landscape, as it is seen by Arthur Lismer, the only surviving member of the Seven represented, and Anne Savage carries something of the old rythm. There are only two others from 1933, Yvonne McKague Housser half abstracts a swamp, but her second picture is a sombre non-objective, remembering a journey to Mexico, and Isabel McLaughlin's "Swirl" is inconsequential. Kathleen Daly goes to the Rockies, but her composition of the mountains above Lake O'Hara does not carry much weight.

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Among those who look about them and give us their reactions to the more intimate aspects of their environment -- not The Scene - is Paraskeva Clark of Toronto. I was not entirely convinced by her "6 A.M.- October", and the water beads in "Rain on Window" disturbed me, but she made me feel place, time and weather.

It is gratifying to see her trying something new, getting into the non-figurative without going all the way. You are entitled to look for the new in these exhibitions, and I was glad to see old painters coming up with new ideas - I won't say old dogs learning new tricks - and new painters being invited to contribute.

Here is B. Cogill Haworth of Toronto going big, and Carl Schaefer going small (in drawings of trilliums and corn stalks); Jack Shadbolt of Vancouver giving up colour for black and white and script writing; Fritz Brandtner giving up drawing for an all-over conflagration of well modulated colour, a distillation of "Autumn"; Marian Scott leaving behind her figurative symbols for a study of colour relationships and texture; Betty Goodwin developing a new freedom and daring in her handling of the still life; Gentile Tondino coming to grips with drawing and space in two fastidious paintings, "Woman with Mirror" and "Figure Washing".

Of the Group's invited guests I noticed particularly four from British Columbia - Richard Ciccimarra (though why he struck out the face of one of his figures I don't know); Sherry Grauer, imaginative in mixed media and collage; Michael Morris, with a richly coloured abstraction of an arbutus, and Donald Harvey, with a vigorous insect form on a green ground; one from Alberta, John Snow, whose water color "Tiryns" shows sombre tones through black bars; one from Toronto, Betty Mochizuki, whose "The Beginning" is the poetic evocation of life under water, or under earth, I'm not sure which, and Pierre Gendron and Louise Brujet from Montreal.

"Borrowed Landscape" which won the \$1,000. prize for Henry W. Jones of Montreal is a lot of fun, a carnival of gay colour and dancing forms. I don't know about its staying power, but it should last as long as some of the pretentious displays, and there's more pleasure in it.

(NOTE: Mr. Ayre incorrectly reported the winner of the prize as "Borrowed Landscape" whereas it should have been "Winter on Stanley Street".

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